

Promoting Student's Awareness about Peace Education at University Level through Active Citizenship Program



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Abstract: This current paper investigated the perceptions and views of university students of the Active Citizenship Program at the BS level. Public sector universities that were offering a course of active citizenship program according to purposive sampling and were five in number. By using the Purposive sampling technique, 150 students of the 4th semesters, 75 participants and 75 non-participants of the Active Citizenship Program and were made part of the study. SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data, and for the purpose of finding different independent t-test was applied between the responses of the participants and non-participants of the program. The result indicated that awareness programs/ courses related to peace education helped students to get awareness. The present program and course have contributed towards developing awareness with respect to knowledge and in fostering peace education skills but did not have a huge impact on the attitudes of participants about peace.

Key Words: Peace Education, Active Citizenship, Students Awareness

Introduction

Peace education is one of the most important concepts of attainment of values of knowledge and the development of capacities, limits and furthermore practices to live peacefully with each other and within the environment ([Webster, 2013](#)).

[Kester \(2010\)](#) expands that the significance of peace-related education is to consolidate the enhancement of capacities related to peacebuilding, for example, talk and aesthetic/ intermediation accomplishments. It is an issue introducing education that efforts individuals to work in the normal qualities/ conduct on which a peace culture is recharged, along with the movement of peaceful conflict, goal abilities, and a guarantee to cooperate for comprehension of an ideal and typical culture.

Peace education's standard objective is to terminate conflicts and support peace by giving an arrangement relating to peace and to develop a peace inspecting character. [Fountain \(1999\)](#) has stated that a vital procedure to improve information concerning peace education is only by means of education.

As per [McLeod \(2008\)](#), peace education should be made a significant part of necessary education as it leads to the support of knowledge, values and qualities which can help to control any person conduct so that they can actually avoid and resolve conflict with peace.

Different numbers of peace-related programs have been developed by national committees for UNICEF. "Education for All", a World Declaration by [UNICEF in 1999](#), expressed clearly that essential adapting requirement contains not just fundamental tools, for instance, numeracy and literacy moreover the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to perform and live-in pride. Additionally, it expresses that the attainment of such necessities infers an obligation to advance social equity, acknowledgement of contrasts and peace (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990).

A lifestyle of peace will be cultivated when people of the world become mindful of worldwide issues, have what it takes to settle the contentions and incredible exertion for equity peacefully, live by overall principles of basic freedoms and reasonableness,

enthusiasm for a variety of social and regard the world and each other. Such learning can be accomplished with the help of systematic education for peace (Hague, 1999).

As a key initiative capacity in the 21st century, a social program like Active Citizenship supports conversation that includes intercultural and public dedication.

As mentioned in one of the studies of [Demos \(2007\)](#), The British Council runs and controls the Active Citizenship Program working with basic culture affiliations any place throughout the world. The initiative was taken back in 2009, and it has been delivered in Europe, the Middle East, South Asia and Africa and now in reach of around 100,000 beings to take advantage through its planning, gatherings, social examination and International Study Visits.

The program presents and enables the citizens a platform where they can join calmly, mutually and can be productive with one another in the advancement and development of their networking (Rugh, 2002).

A course has been introduced to be offered at BS Level by HEC in collaboration with British Council titled "Citizenship Education and Community Engagement". The content of the course has developed by the HEC National Curriculum Review Committee.

It is vital to discover the way that leads us to a society that is peaceful to live in. By looking at the contemporary world conditions, numerous neighborhood and worldwide associations find a way to advance the climate of serenity through education by inculcating peace education programs at all levels. The educational program improves with peace training manuals, handbooks, manuals that have been contrived for Pakistani youth (UNESCO, 2008).

An Approach to Higher Education Sector about Peace Education

One of the most significant sectors that need to look up and solve peace-related issues is probably Higher Education Sector. One-of-a-kind credits of the HEIs make them common pioneers in peace education, information is given to the learners with respect to the idea of harmony, brutality and abilities goal towards productive clash, mentalities and qualities identified with positive thinking, self-guideline, and independence ([Johnson, 2005](#)). The focus of Peace Education doesn't exclusively on the prevention of violence rather creating a culture of peace in the society in which social equity is set up, and violence is

prevented ([Galtung, 2002](#)).

At every level/stage of education, educators usually in agreement that students should be provided with an education that has peace-related content, and they should be trained in a way that they can live and interact with each other in a peaceful manner. Considering the contemporary situation of the world, it is found to be the most important thing that needs to be inculcated in the learners of today. Tertiary education is viewed as massively critical, and the individuals in the Tertiary education should be given awareness about attitude, skills and knowledge for the peacekeeping capabilities. Such students will transform into national developers and genuine models of society.

The main objective of this course includes teachings of being a good citizen and role as Active Citizens in the promotion of a harmonious, productive and successful society. This course is of total three credits hours one (01) for Social Action Project (SAP) / report writing and 2 credits hours for Theory ([Jensen, 2012](#)).

Institutions of 21st Century and Peace Education

Education related to peace is becoming the need of the current situation of the world, and it needs to be inculcated in the learners of today. Teachings of a peaceful society include the establishment of flexible and multi-disciplinary viewpoints. Peace plays an important role in the protection and safety of human rights, social equity, and people's common habitat. (Smith, 2004).

Incorporating peace education at each level of the education system is the utmost demand of the society. Peace starts with the strong and honest connection of the learners in the process of learnings, which is the most effective and essential way to interact with each other at individual levels, as peace education encourages rational thinking. As a result, which turned out to be magical whether it can only be build up and nurture through a practical approach. Following consideration can be followed for imparting peace education.

- Creation of a peaceful classroom
- Investing in peace, violence and conflict
- The vision of a peaceful future

Peace Among Youth

Human being transform herself/himself into an energetic, passionate and accountable citizen of the civilization is termed as youth and he/she has to play a major role for the development of a smooth, calm and society which has peace in it (National Youth Policy, 2008).

Studies on peace talks about the part of young age in troublesome social states. Youth are depicted as threats and victims; however, as highlighted by modern researchers, they are considered as the key factor of a developed and successful society (Sellevold, 2012).

The young generation of today has the potential and qualities which can help them to take their fullest part and contribution in the success of an establishment of peace in the society. According to Sellevold (2012), today's youth is going through a time of continuous experimentation with their lives. Skill-based learning and practical approach in the education system need to be incorporated.

Harris and Morrison (2008) led an investigation and found that "a skilful way and procedure involves active listening, self-reflection, collaboration, mutual understandings and problem-solving techniques. People become empowered with such skills, knowledge, values and help them to create a safe and sound world with a culture of peace and also aims at the preparation of youth to affect positive change in the world.

Peace is like a plant's seed that develops and turns into another plantlet, and then grow into a huge, tall tree and spread its branches everywhere to give safety and shelter to every who sits /stand under it. Just like a small seed of a plant, the creation of a peaceful environment starts with the efforts at individual levels, then from individual's transfers to a family, then to society and then to the whole world.

One of the critical roles played by education is in terms of civic responsibility and citizenship that leads to the building of a culture of peace (UNDP, 2010). Youth is not aware of the concept of peace and conflict management as a society do not prepare and teach them for this concept, so the most important ingredients to socialize and train the youth is by means of education which can be in the form of textbooks, teaching methods adopted by the instructors at all levels of educational systems. Hence peace education is the most impressive source if the new generation is incorporated with it by means of education given at

institutions.

As per the research work of (Barakat and Karpinska (2008), teaching the individuals the values of mutual understandings and observing patience for the cultural differences helps them to avoid if any conflict or issues come across them, and it also encourages a positive and respectful behavior of youngster towards every culture.

A well-known philosopher Aristotle additionally focuses that "youth make all the differences if good habits become part of their personalities" the only vehicle for the development of a society and changing behavior of the youth is through fostering peace and by educating them the values, skills and knowledge which is helpful for the progress of the personal growth and community. (Momodu, 2013).

As per the research study of Bodine and Crawford (1998), if students are sensitized in a proper way that they can deeply understand the conflicts resolution techniques and can stop the conflicts by using such strategies and end conflicts. Hence education at university level student's minds should be trained by giving exposure and opportunities to make proper use of the problem-solving skills: talks, thoughts and consensus decision for the promotion of peace (Siddiqui, Qayyum, & Deck, 2016; Bodine & Schrupf, 1994).

The most effective weapon to end the war of conflicts is by educating the youth as they are the building blocks of any society; if they are provided with the teachings of inculcating peace within themselves, they will definitely progress altogether with the provision of peace. In one of the studies of Boulding (2000), at the absolute first stage, the basic need of calm and plausible combination on this delicate earth should be known by the educators and moreover the explanation of being a part of the globalization need to move from ethnocentrism into multiculturalism. Last yet not least, with the power of love, human beings can foster and increase peace by mutual understandings, positive discussions and building g of a positive and peaceful world (Nakamura, 2004).

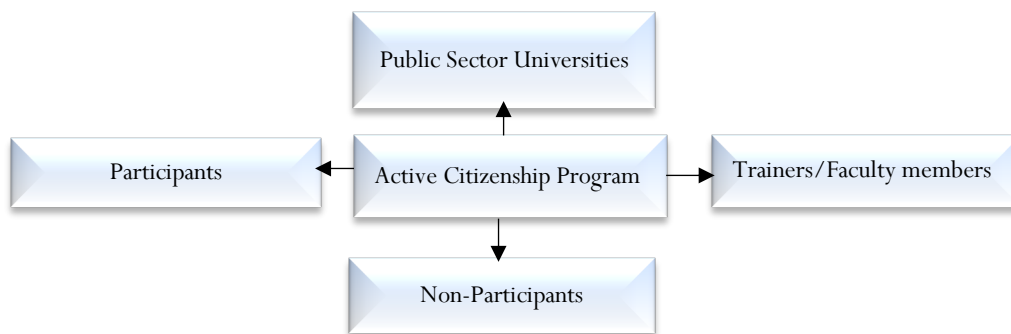
Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives

- To explore the awareness of students through the Active Citizenship Program (ACP) about peace education at universities by HEC/BC

- to determine the level of contribution of ACP towards the knowledge development among BS students about peace education.
- To what extent ACP has promoted citizenship skills among BS students at the higher education level.
- To access the students' attitude towards peace education at the BS level.
- To access the difference in students' level of awareness who got enrolled in ACP with those who have not taken the program about peace education.

Method and Procedure



Sample

Five public universities were offering the course of active citizenship program at the university level by using the purposive sampling method. To get the viewpoints of diversified groups total of 150 students from the 4th semester's Graduate level from the five public sector universities were made part of the sample. 75 students were participants, and the other 75 students were non-participants of the ACP were also selected purposively.

Research Design and Instrument

The application of the quantitative approach led to the generation of data from the study, and an adapted questionnaire was used as a data collection tool by Omirin and Fadekemi Finke (2015). In order to answer the research questions, the researcher adopted

the survey instrument with supervisor guidance and contextualized it according to the basis of the context of Pakistan and data from the two groups' participants and non-participants of the ACP was collected with the help of this questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three parts (a) knowledge, (2) attitude and (3) performance. In the light of the objectives of the study, questionnaire items were considered by using the Likert Scale of; Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), (UN) Undecided, disagree (A), Strongly disagree (SA). The instrument's internal consistency was checked through Cronbach's Alpha (a). The total number of items in the questionnaire were 38, and the value of Cronbach's Alpha was .792, as (Gay 2008) suggested that the value of Alpha, i.e. .75, is acceptable.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics three Individual Categories

Variables	No of items	Reliability
Knowledge	15	.78
Skills	10	.76
Attitudes	11	.79
Overall, questions	38	.792

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher personally visited the universities for the process of data collection. The analysis of data was done with the help of SPSS, and different techniques

were applied in order to get valid results. Statistical techniques applied for analysis were (mean, standard deviation and independent t-test).

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 2. Factor wise results of T-test of Participants and Non- participants of Active Citizenship Program on the Basis of Knowledge

	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Participants ACP Program	75	4.013	0.260	22.79
Non-Participants ACP Program	75	2.853	0.356	

df = 148 Table value at 0.05 level = 1.96

Table 2 explains that among the knowledge statements, the mean of participants of the program (mean=4.013) is greater than the non-participants of the program (mean=2.853). Hence, it shows that the difference between the results of the participants and

non-participants of the program is significant. The calculated t-value of factor wise results of Knowledge statements is 22.79. These results are significant and higher than the value (1.96).

Table 3. Factor Wise Results of T-Test of Participants and Non - Participants of Active Citizenship Program on the role of ACP in Peace Education Skills Enhancement of Students

	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Participants ACP Program	75	3.947	0.432	17.46
Non-Participants ACP Program	75	2.987	0.201	

df = 148 Table value at 0.05 level = 1.96

Table 3 shows that among the skills related statements, the mean of the participants of the program (mean=3.947) is greater than the non-participants of the program (mean=2.987). Therefore, a significant difference exists between the

results of the two groups of participants and non-participants of the program. The calculated t-value of factor wise results of skills related statements is 17.46. These results are significant and higher than the value (1.96).

Table 4. Overall Results of T-test of Participants and Non- participants of Active Citizenship Program on the Basis of Attitudes Statements

	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Participants ACP Program	75	3.587	0.496	9.28
Non-Participants ACP Program	75	2.987	0.260	

df = 148 Table value at 0.05 level = 1.984

Table 4 shows that in the attitude's statements, the mean of participants of the program (mean=3.587) is greater than the non-participants of the program (mean=2.987). So, it shows a significant difference between the results of the participants and non-participants of the program. The calculated t-value of factor wise results of attitude statements is 9.28. These results are significant and higher than the value (1.96).

Discussion

The study concluded that awareness about knowledge, basic skills and attitudes of peace education are essential for the learners; such knowledge and skill are

very significant for the youth as these help learners at every stage of their life. This finding is like the current exploration (Bergmann, 2012; Northouse, 2008), which found that knowledge, skills and attitudes towards peace are vital for the students at the university level since it assists them with getting mindful and sharpen individual; in this age, they become mindful and comprehend the exercises going on in their current circumstance and nation.

The results of the research indicate that the student's awareness about the knowledge of peace education expanded by taking courses or partaking in various exercises, learners began communicating that joint effort and collaboration can help them manage

feelings, for example, outrage shock and conflicts. [Thomas \(2009\)](#), in his exploration, expresses that when students are engaged in activity-based learning alongside practical application in a functioning atmosphere, at this point, learners investigate their abilities and acquire on their own. The findings of this research also supported by research conducted by Woods (2010) that partaking in various exercises assist students with expecting genuine circumstance and learn through investigation. Analysis proved that students being a part of ACP have created comprehension of social contrasts and to give regard and correspondence among all social/ethnic gatherings. UNESCO (2000) report also supports the results of the present research by stating that the world is becoming a global village and so the cultural diversity. This study also stated that giving value, respect, and accepting the cultures of others leads to peace promotion in the environment.

The study exposed those participants of the ACP are prepared in a better way to integrate and practice peace education in their life. The specialized training given in this academic program can be viewed as a contributing element to increase the awareness of the students who were the participants of the ACP. On the other hand, non-participants must be given integrative and comprehensive training to improve their awareness of peace education and apply the equivalent in their field of practice. Active Citizenship Program has contributed awareness about peace education on knowledge development but did not have a huge impact on the skills and attitudes of participants.

Recommendations

1. As a subject and as a discipline, Peace education

may be made a necessary part of the curriculum at each phase of the educational process.

2. Extra-curricular exercises engaging in peace practices should be made a section of all educational projects offered at higher education level in order to install peace respect in the learners.
3. In view of findings, it is recommended that at all levels of education, students should be trained and imparted in peace-promoting skills. Such training may help to prepare the trainee with the desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes compendium of peace education.
4. Short-term peace education exchanges should be made available between students from various streams to help students overcome regional prejudices, caste and class barriers.
5. Citizenship programs should be carried out at all level of educational institutions so that students can be sensitized about peace education in order to prevent conflict among them, and there ought to be coordination between institutions, Government and NGO's for running Active Citizenship Programs.
6. The extension of the timeline of the program, especially the SAP project, should be taken into consideration by British Council and Higher Education Commission.

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